



# Generosity Expressions Series

*Exploring how God has designed us to express generosity in multiple ways*



**Volunteering**

**Service**

## ***Bible Study*** ***January 26, 2020***

### **Acknowledgements**

This Bible Study arranged and written by the Rev. Dr. Benjamin C. Squires.

Portions taken from *The Generosity Gap*, © Barna and Thrivent Financial.

Article available online: <https://www.barna.com/research/volunteering-giving/>

Generosity Expressions™ is developed by Thrivent, in partnership with Barna.

1. *Read Acts 4:32-37.*

*What is the vision for how the Church does life together?*

2. *Read Acts 6:1-7. What's the issue?*

3. *How does that relate to the vision of "life together" in Acts 4?*

4. *How is the issue addressed?*

5. *What wasn't going to be the solution?*

6. *Peak ahead to the rest of Acts 6. How are the servants considered, looked upon, in terms of the ministry?*

7. *In what ways do we as a congregation share and live out the “life together” vision of Acts 4?*

*In what ways do we NOT live out this vision?*

8. *What would be some similar issue (to Acts 6) we might face in today’s church?*

9. *How have we OR could we address this issue?*

10. *Similar to Acts 6, what wouldn’t be the solution?*

11. *How are volunteers/servers considered, looked upon, in terms of the ministry?*



## *The Relationship Between Volunteering and Giving*

Research Releases in Faith & Christianity • August 21, 2018

### **Volunteering and Service Among the Most Generous Acts**

In what ways are Christians most often generous to others? Barna asked participants in the quantitative study to select, from a list of possibilities, the three acts they consider to be most generous. Almost six in 10 (57%) believe taking care of a sick person is one of the most generous things one can do. A majority in each generation agrees. But second on the list among all Christians is volunteering for an organization (52%). This is considered highly generous by a large share of each age cohort—yet a significantly smaller percentage views volunteering for a person (for example, driving them to the airport or babysitting for free) to be exceptionally generous.

Analysis suggests this disparity may have something to do with people’s perceptions of personal cost—that actions requiring more effort tend to be perceived as more generous. For example, volunteering for an organization often requires specialized training, adherence to a set of rules and expectations and a specific time commitment, compared to helping a friend or family member. A similar finding supports this insight: Many people consider giving \$40 to a homeless person more generous than giving \$40 to an organization or church. The dollar amount is the same in each case, but the cost of a personal encounter with a homeless teen or adult tends to be higher than tucking a check in the offering basket when it passes by.

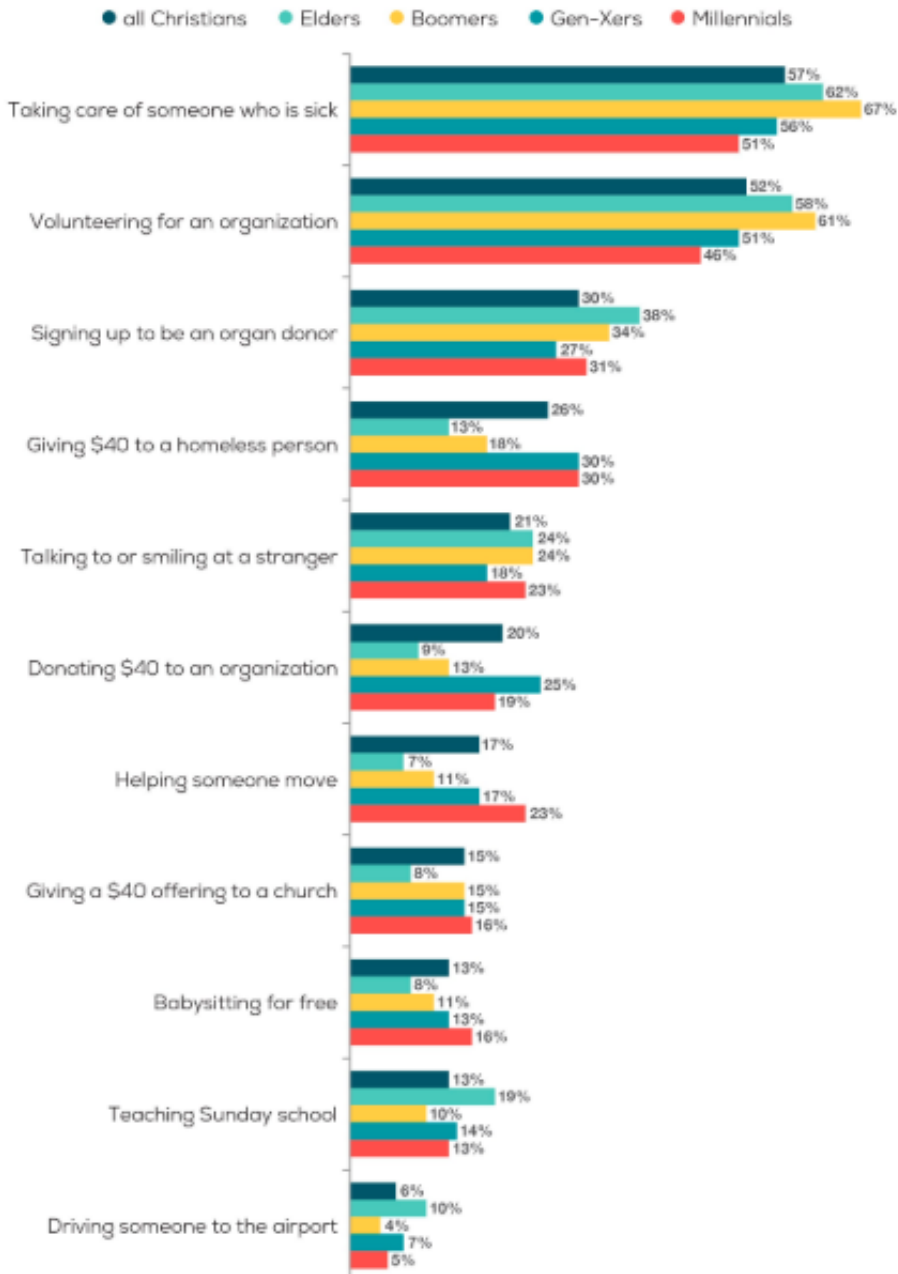
12. *What is your response to this?*

13. *How does it relate to the way the Apostles viewed the Deacons?*

# THE MOST GENEROUS THINGS A PERSON CAN DO

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Respondents could choose up to three.

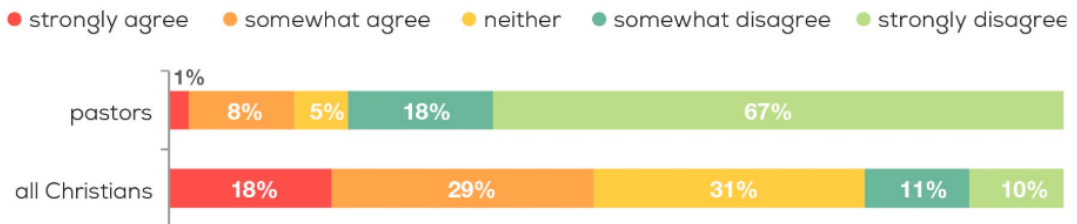


## Volunteering Is Not Equated with Giving—But Often Accompanies It

Christians don't just have a high opinion of volunteering as a form of generosity—they also see it as interchangeable with financial offerings. Only one in five Christians disagrees (10% strongly, 11% somewhat) that it would be acceptable to give of one's time instead of one's money to their church. Pastors, for the most part, don't see these two activities in the same light. More than eight out of 10 disagree strongly (67%) or somewhat (18%) that "it is okay for a member who volunteers extensively not to give financially."

### IT IS OKAY FOR MEMBERS TO VOLUNTEER FOR THEIR CHURCH INSTEAD OF GIVING FINANCIALLY

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14. *What is your response to this?*

15. *How does it relate to the way the Apostles viewed the Deacons?*

16. *Do you think that has affected your experience in the Church?*

*Do you think that is true today at Bethel?*

17. *How would this understanding shape how we talk about Generosity at Bethel?*

The gap between pastors and parishioners on this point is interesting, given that volunteering appears to be a focus of sermons more often than financial giving. For instance, only 39 percent of pastors say they or other leaders speak from the pulpit about tithing or giving to the church at least once a month (17% once per month, 22% multiple times per month). But more than six in 10 say they or other leaders speak from the pulpit at least once a month on the topic of volunteering (35% once, 27% multiple times). If pastors' own messages seem to prioritize acts of service over financial giving, it's not too surprising that people in their pews highly value volunteer hours, even as an appropriate substitute for a monetary gift.

Whether or not pastors think the two are interchangeable, they would do well to focus on *both* forms of generosity, as Barna's data highlights a strong link between serving and financial giving. As the chart shows, Christians who give most are also most likely to say they have volunteered within the past week or month. The pattern also holds true for those who consider generosity extremely important. In other words, Christians prone to participate in one type of giving aren't looking to get a pass on the other. Whether giving of money or of time, generous Christians are simply generous.

**VOLUNTEERING VS. GIVING** Barna

It turns out that giving time and giving money go hand in hand. Those who give more money volunteer more often. And those who volunteer more often give more money.

**Last Time I Volunteered, by How Much I Gave**



# Generosity Expressions Series

## January—February 2020

*A sermon & study series to help us explore how God has designed us to express generosity*

Generosity Expressions helps us to see that there's not just one way to show generosity. Generosity shows up in five different expressions: monetary giving, hospitality, emotional-relational support, volunteering-service and gifts. But each of us has a unique combination of those expressions, so that one person's generosity doesn't look the same as another.



## The Generosity Expressions™ Profile

**We need as many people as possible to complete this by February 2.**

As a tool for this series, The Generosity Expressions™ Profile is a short online assessment experience that will give you helpful insights about yourself, but it will also help us create an anonymous report about what Bethel's generosity looks like. We need as many of you to complete this brief assessment as possible.

**Go to: [www.bethelgurnee.org/generosity](http://www.bethelgurnee.org/generosity)**

**(NOTE:** It asks for your name and email **ONLY** to provide you with your individual results. The congregation will only have access to anonymous data).

### Sunday Series Schedule

**(Sermons & Sunday AM Adult Bible Study)**

**January 26** - Volunteering / Service

**February 2** - Hospitality

**February 9** - Monetary Support

**February 16** - Gifts

**February 23** - Emotional/Relational Support